

EPA Morning News Highlights 01.31.18

The Hill: Pruitt: National fuel standard should be 'unified'

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt says he supports a unified national vehicle fuel standard, stoking state fears that the agency may do away with waivers allowing states to implement stronger standards. Speaking before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Tuesday, Pruitt said maintaining one national program is "essential."

Hawaii Receives \$340,000 EPA grant for clean air project on Oahu

The Hawaii State Department of Health has received a \$339,269 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a clean energy project on Oahu. The DOH will use the EPA funds to replace diesel vehicles operating on Oahu, according to a news release. The grant is part of the agency's Diesel Emission Reduction Act program, which aims to "curb harmful pollution from large diesel sources," which includes trucks, buses and agriculture equipment.

Clarion Ledger: EPA proposes to make contaminated Grenada site a Superfund

Two years after public outcry and a letter from a Mississippi congressman, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing the old Grenada Manufacturing site become a Superfund. This means the Grenada site, which remains contaminated decades after toxic dumping from different companies operating the plant, would be placed on the "National Priorities List." The designation suggests the level of contamination at the site warrants funding prioritization and further investigation.

Agri-Pulse: Pruitt promises new WOTUS rule by end of the year

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to publish a new proposal to define "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act in April or May, with a final rule to follow by the end of the year, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said Tuesday. His remarks came at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing marked by criticism from Democrats and praise from Republicans. It was the first time Pruitt had appeared before EPW since his confirmation hearing a little more than a year ago.

National Morning News Highlights 01.31.18

Fox News: State of the Union: Trump extends 'open hand' to Dems, but is met with glum stares, scant applause

President Trump appealed for unity in his first State of the Union speech, declaring a "new American moment" even as many glum Democrats in the audience sat on their hands and refused to acknowledge economic gains or calls to honor veterans. While Trump held firm on his demands for border security and used the grand setting to tout his first-year accomplishments, his call for bipartisanship on the thorny immigration debate met with stonefaced stares from top Democrats such as House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

CBS News: Viewers approve of Trump's first State of the Union address – CBS news poll

Three in four Americans who tuned in to President Trump's State of the Union address tonight approved of the speech he gave. Just a quarter disapproved. Eight in 10 Americans who watched tonight felt that the president was trying to unite the country, rather than divide it. Two-thirds said the speech made them feel proud, though just a third said it made them feel safer. Fewer said the speech made them feel angry or scared.

CNBC: Trump: North Korea's 'reckless pursuit' of nuclear weapons could soon threaten the US

President Donald Trump struck a dire note of warning about North Korea's nuclear ambitions in his State of the Union address Tuesday night. "North Korea's reckless pursuit of nuclear missiles could very soon threaten our homeland," Trump said. The president said the United States was applying "maximum pressure" to prevent any such attack.

Daily Caller: Here's why the DOJ watchdog is investigating Andrew McCabe

The Justice Department's inspector general has been investigating whether former FBI Director Andrew McCabe tried to delay an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails until after the 2016 election, according to a new report. The

Washington Post reports that DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz is looking into why McCabe appears to have waited three weeks to inspect a laptop owned by Anthony Weiner and his wife, Huma Abedin, a longtime Clinton aide. In a surprise move, McCabe stepped down from his position as FBI No. 2 on Monday. He will remain on leave until March when he can retire with a full pension.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/371404-pruitt-national-fuel-standard-should-be-unified>

Pruitt: National fuel standard should be 'unified'

By: Miranda Green, 1/30/18

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt says he supports a unified national vehicle fuel standard, stoking state fears that the agency may do away with waivers allowing states to implement stronger standards.

Speaking before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Tuesday, Pruitt said maintaining one national program is "essential."

Some states, including California and Massachusetts, currently set higher fuel emission standards than the federal standard, as allowed under a waiver program determined by former President Obama.

Pruitt said those states should not be able to dictate federal rules.

"Federalism doesn't mean that one state can dictate to the rest of the country," he said.

The EPA is currently considering whether it plans to implement changes to the current federal fuel standards. It has said it will determine whether changes will be made by April.

Last week EPA air and radiation head Bill Wehrum said at the Washington Auto Show in Washington, D.C., that the agency is leaning toward creating a national standard.

"We've heard loud and clear that having one national program is really important," Wehrum said, describing how the EPA was approaching potentially revising the national fuel emissions standards.

"From a good, solid national and public policy standpoint, the very best outcome for all of us to achieve is one national program," he said.

Pacific Business News

<https://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2018/01/30/hawaii-receives-340-000-epa-grant-for-clean-air.html>

Hawaii Receives \$340,000 EPA grant for clean air project on Oahu

By: HJ Mai, 1/30/18

The Hawaii State Department of Health has received a \$339,269 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a clean energy project on Oahu.

The DOH will use the EPA funds to replace diesel vehicles operating on Oahu, according to a news release. The grant is part of the agency's Diesel Emission Reduction Act program, which aims to "curb harmful pollution from large diesel sources," which includes trucks, buses and agriculture equipment.

"Clean diesel technologies not only improve air quality, but advance innovation and support jobs," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "These projects will significantly reduce harmful emissions and directly benefit the health of residents."

The EPA said by leveraging an additional \$1.32 million from state funds and participating fleets, this project will replace the engines on four old public works trucks at the Honolulu Board of Water Supply, as well as replace an old diesel transit bus with an all-electric bus.

"By promoting clean diesel technologies, we can improve air quality and human health, advance American innovation and support green jobs in economically disadvantaged communities, while growing our economy," Alexis Strauss, acting regional administrator for EPA's Pacific Southwest Region, said in a statement. "Public-private partnerships like the West Coast Collaborative are leading the way on reducing harmful diesel emissions and creating jobs."

The DERA program, which is administered by the EPA's West Coast Collaborative, has awarded nearly \$12.5 million to recipients across eight West Coast states and the U.S. territories of American Samoa and Guam.

According to the collaborative, these projects will improve air quality by reducing over 3,000 tones of nitrogen oxide and 200 tons of particulate matter from over 350 medium and heavy duty diesel engines.

Clarion Ledger

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2018/01/30/epa-proposes-make-contaminated-grenada-site-superfund/1079012001/>

EPA proposes to make contaminated Grenada site a Superfund

By: Anna Wolfe, 1/30/18

Two years after public outcry and a letter from a Mississippi congressman, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing the old Grenada Manufacturing site become a Superfund.

This means the Grenada site, which remains contaminated decades after toxic dumping from different companies operating the plant, would be placed on the "National Priorities List." The designation suggests the level of contamination at the site warrants funding prioritization and further investigation.

EPA and the state Department of Environmental Quality will hold a public meeting at Lewis Johnson Senior Citizen Complex at 6 p.m. Feb. 6 to discuss the process of putting the Grenada site on the National Priorities List.

"Adding the site to the NPL will allow EPA to conduct a comprehensive assessment of all the risks to public health and the environment, and take the necessary cleanup actions. Only sites added to the NPL are eligible to receive federal funding for long-term cleanup," said a media release from EPA Tuesday.

The plant operators had been using and dumping a known carcinogen, trichloroethylene, or TCE, which is used as a cleaning agent and degreaser, and hexavalent chromium, the carcinogenic chemical Erin Brockovich is famous for exposing in Hinkley, California.

TCE can cause toxic effects to the liver, kidneys, central nervous system, immune system, male reproductive system and developing fetuses and is linked to many cancers, most strongly liver cancer.

"Past operations, spills and waste handling practices resulted in air, groundwater, surface water and soil contamination," said the EPA release. "The solvent trichloroethene (TCE) has been found in the air inside the manufacturing building, groundwater beneath the site and in the adjacent Eastern Heights neighborhood, a former disposal area associated with the facility, wetlands and Riverdale Creek."

Starting in 2015, residents of Eastern Heights came together to launch their own investigation into the cleanup at Grenada Manufacturing, mandated by the EPA beginning 25 years ago, after it was discovered that various companies that operated the plant contributed to contamination of the area.

"You start to question: What's going on that the hearse is always in your neighborhood?" resident Shay Harris told Clarion Ledger in 2016.

A lawsuit filed by residents claim the companies' actions have caused damage to the property of 50 homeowners, but residents have also raised concerns about the contamination's health impacts.

Of 225 longtime residents in the neighborhood, there have been 68 cases of cancer, the Clarion Ledger found in 2016. Belinda Kincaid, 59, lived on the street closest to the plant. She battled breast cancer since 2004. Kincaid was 24 years old and had been living in Eastern Heights with her family for four years in 1985 when she was first diagnosed with uterine cancer.

"I've been through so much within the last couple years, my main focus has been trying to survive," she told the Clarion Ledger in 2016. "Before, you just looked at it for what it was. As I look back, it's alarming the things that happened ... It's upsetting. It's heart breaking. I just have to deal with the card that I have. The way I see it, the damage is done. I could give in to it, but that's not going to help."

Kincaid died in December.

In a March 2016 letter to EPA headquarters, 2nd District U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson criticized the EPA's actions, or lack thereof, in response to contamination from the Grenada Manufacturing plant.

"The problem would have never come to light if the residents would have not grown tired and weary of watching loved ones die, without any explanation," Thompson wrote.

Now, Attorney General Jim Hood is suing the companies responsible. In a statement following his April 2017 complaint, he said, "the companies responsible for polluting our environment have taken no effective steps to stem the tide of the toxic plumes they have created and have shown no willingness to finally put a stop to the migration of these plumes away from their dumping grounds into our state's resources."

The Grenada site receiving a Superfund designation is just the latest in a timeline of events dating to 1961, when the manufacturing site was first established. In 1990, after ownership had shifted from Rockwell Standard to Textron Randall, DEQ began to facilitate excavation at the facility.

EPA started overseeing remediation in 1995. Testing in the Eastern Heights subdivision began in 2015.

Agri-Pulse

<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/10546-pruitt-promises-new-wotus-rule-by-end-of-year>

Pruitt promises new WOTUS rule by end of the year

By: Steve Daives, 1/31/18

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to publish a new proposal to define "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act in April or May, with a final rule to follow by the end of the year, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said Tuesday.

His remarks came at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing marked by criticism from Democrats and praise from Republicans. It was the first time Pruitt had appeared before EPW since his confirmation hearing a little more than a year ago.

Since then, Pruitt has offered optimistic predictions of how quickly his agency would be able to repeal and replace the WOTUS rule, known by its supporters as the Clean Water Rule. At an appropriations hearing last June, he said a new rule would be in place by the end of March 2018.

EPA has taken comments on its proposal to rescind WOTUS but has not officially rescinded the rule.

In an exchange with Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., Pruitt said adopting a new WOTUS rule would not be an example of deregulation "in the traditional sense." Instead, he said, "We will be providing regulatory certainty because there are steps being taken to provide a substitute for WOTUS."

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, thanked Pruitt for "providing key commitments to maintain the letter and the spirit of the Renewable Fuel Standard." But she also wanted to know the status of EPA's review of Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) requirements that prevent the selling of higher blends of ethanol year-round.

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa

Pruitt said EPA is looking at whether it has the authority to expand the waiver for E15. "It's not really a policy issue," but a legal one, he said, telling Ernst, "We look forward to getting that answer very soon."

In an interview Tuesday afternoon with Fox News, Pruitt expanded on his views on the RFS. "That Renewable Fuel Standard is something that impacts our economy, sometimes in a very difficult way ... This is an issue that as we talk with Congress, we need RIN reform, we need RFS reform, in this area."

In the Fox interview, Pruitt said, "We need to find a balance" on enforcement and administration of RINs, the Renewable Identification Numbers that are used to track compliance with the RFS.

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., said he was concerned about EPA plans to review aspects of the Worker Protection Standard, a rule to protect farmworkers from pesticide exposure. In December, EPA asked for comments on the WPS that focus on the minimum age requirement of 18 years; the Designated Representative provision, which allows workers to designate a person to receive information about pesticide applications; and the Application Exclusion Zone, which requires a buffer zone when spraying to protect workers and anyone else who might be nearby.

The minimum age requirement "was put in place because pesticides can increase the risk of cancer for children whose brains are still developing," Booker said. And the Designated Representative provision "is often (farmworkers') best chance for getting an advocate."

Booker noted that EPA cited President Trump's Executive Order on deregulation but not a previous E.O. on environmental justice. "You don't have anything in (the proposal) expressing concern about disproportionate impact on low-income folks and minorities," Booker said, referring to the proposal and asking Pruitt to get back with him on the environmental justice issues.

Democrats such as ranking member Tom Carper, D-Del., also took aim at Pruitt's record and statements. Carper was particularly agitated when criticizing Pruitt for "misrepresenting" President Barack Obama's position on whether economic growth and environmental protection are achievable at the same time. Pruitt has said the Obama

administration forced Americans to choose between jobs and the environment, but Carper noted that Obama repeatedly said that the two can go together.

Two farm-state senators credited Pruitt's deregulatory actions with increasing their states' employment rolls. Fischer said Nebraska's 2.7 percent unemployment rate is a direct result of Pruitt's efforts at EPA "to streamline the regulatory process that has for many years negatively impacted job creators' ability to hire workers because they were forced to allocate resources to comply with many cumbersome regulations."

Ernst said Pruitt's "back-to-basics approach has helped Iowa's unemployment rate dip below 3 percent for the first time since the year 2000."

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/01/30/state-union-trump-extends-open-hand-to-dems-but-is-met-with-glum-stares-scant-applause.html>

State of the Union: Trump extends 'open hand' to Dems, but is met with glum stares, scant applause

By: Alex Pappas, 1/31/18

President Trump appealed for unity in his first State of the Union speech, declaring a "new American moment" even as many glum Democrats in the audience sat on their hands and refused to acknowledge economic gains or calls to honor veterans.

While Trump held firm on his demands for border security and used the grand setting to tout his first-year accomplishments, his call for bipartisanship on the thorny immigration debate met with stonefaced stares from top Democrats such as House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

"Tonight, I am extending an open hand to work with members of both parties -- Democrats and Republicans -- to protect our citizens of every background, color, religion and creed," he said.

It remains unclear whether Democrats are ready to deal on immigration, but the issue could hang over a looming Feb. 8 deadline to pass a new spending bill. With that in mind, Trump used his 80-minute speech to signal a willingness to make bipartisan deals on second-year-agenda priorities like immigration as well as infrastructure.

"Tonight, I call upon all of us to set aside our differences, to seek out common ground, and to summon the unity we need to deliver for the people we were elected to serve," the president said.

The president described his recent offer on immigration as a "fair compromise" for both sides. The White House is pushing a plan to broaden eligibility for the DACA program -- which gives a reprieve to illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, and which Trump is planning to end absent a legislative solution -- in exchange for border wall funding and other big changes.

"Tonight, I call upon all of us to set aside our differences, to seek out common ground, and to summon the unity we need to deliver for the people we were elected to serve."

- President Trump

He described his offer of a path to citizenship for 1.8 million DACA recipients, or DREAMers.

"We presented the Congress with a detailed proposal that should be supported by both parties as a fair compromise -- one where nobody gets everything they want, but where our country gets the critical reforms it needs and must have," he said.

Even as he pushed for an immigration deal, the president didn't stray from messaging aimed at his base. Trump said his "highest loyalty, my greatest compassion, and my constant concern is for America's children, America's struggling workers, and America's forgotten communities."

Americans are dreamers too," he said.

He also called on Congress to "finally close the deadly loopholes" that have allowed MS-13 to flourish inside the country.

The president tackled national security toward the end of the speech, specifically warning that North Korea's "reckless pursuit of nuclear missiles" could "very soon" threaten the United States.

"We are waging a campaign of maximum pressure to prevent that from happening," he said. "Past experience has taught us that complacency and concessions only invite aggression and provocation. I will not repeat the mistakes of past administrations that got us into this dangerous position."

During the speech, the president recognized the parents of Otto Warmbier, the University of Virginia student who died over the summer after being injured while imprisoned in North Korea, who attended Tuesday's address.

Vowing to fight terrorism, the president said he ordered Defense Secretary James Mattis to re-examine the military's detention policy toward terrorists and keep open the detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay.

The president called for bipartisan cooperation on infrastructure, saying "together, we can reclaim our great building heritage." He said every federal dollar for infrastructure projects should be "leveraged" by partnering with state and local governments and private sector investors for projects.

"We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways and waterways all across our land, and we will do it with American heart, and American hands, and American grit," Trump said.

"This is our new American moment. There has never been a better time to start living the American dream."

- President Trump

Like other presidents before him, Trump used the address to tout first-year accomplishments like the GOP tax cut bill, regulation rollbacks, the elimination of ObamaCare's individual mandate and gains made over the last year against the Islamic State.

Insisting that the "era of economic surrender is over," Trump reiterated his campaign promises to fix bad trade deals and negotiate new ones. And he celebrated the stock market gains during his first year in office.

"The stock market has smashed one record after another, gaining \$8 trillion in value," he said. "That is great news for Americans' 401k, retirement, pension and college savings accounts."

"This is our new American moment," Trump said. "There has never been a better time to start living the American Dream."

He began his speech by praising heroes during natural disasters and tragedies over the last year, including during the summer shooting of Republican lawmakers at a baseball practice.

"With us tonight is one of the toughest people ever to serve in this House -- a guy who took a bullet, almost died, and was back to work three and a half months later: the legend from Louisiana, Congressman Steve Scalise," Trump said.

Earlier Tuesday, during a pre-speech lunch with television anchors, Trump -- who does not shy away from conflict with his detractors -- said "unity is really what I'm striving for, to bring the country together."

"If I could unite this country, I would consider it a tremendous success," Trump said. "I would love to be able to bring back our country in a great form of unity, without a major event -- very tough to do. I would like to do it without a major event, because that major event is usually a bad thing."

The address comes after a year of partisan clashes in Washington over health care, the 'travel ban,' regulations and more.

Ahead of the speech, leaders were bracing for potential conflicts.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi delivered a stern warning to House Democrats attending the speech during a closed-door caucus meeting on Tuesday, imploring them to play nice.

Pelosi advised Democrats against a walk-out, with sources in the room saying Pelosi told members "if you want to walk out, don't come" and to let Trump be "his slobbering self."

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus wore traditional kente cloth in protest of Trump's reported comments about immigration from "s---hole countries."

During the speech, some caucus members declined to stand even to honor a 12-year-old guest of the first family who was recognized for gathering flags for veterans' graves.

Trump praised Preston Sharp, a boy from California, who started a movement to place flags at the graves of fallen service members.

"Preston's reverence for those who have served our nation reminds us why we salute our flag, why we put our hands on our hearts for the pledge of allegiance, and why we proudly stand for the national anthem," he said.

Trump's comments were aimed at the NFL football players who have been kneeling during the national anthem as a protest against police shootings of African-Americans.

Democrats tapped Rep. Joe Kennedy III, D-Mass., the grandson of Sen. Robert Kennedy, to deliver the party's official response to Trump. In remarks before a small audience in Massachusetts, Kennedy said many in the country have spent Trump's first year in office "anxious, angry, afraid."

"Folks, it would be easy to dismiss this past year as chaos," he said. "As partisanship, as politics. But it's far, far bigger than that. This administration isn't just targeting the laws that protect us, they're targeting the very idea that we are all worthy of protection."

Trump, though, struck a positive and optimistic note in his speech, ending his address to Congress by saying: "Americans fill the world with art and music. They push the bounds of science and discovery."

"And they forever remind us of what we should never forget: The people dreamed this country," Trump continued. "The people built this country. And it is the people who are making America great again."

CBS News

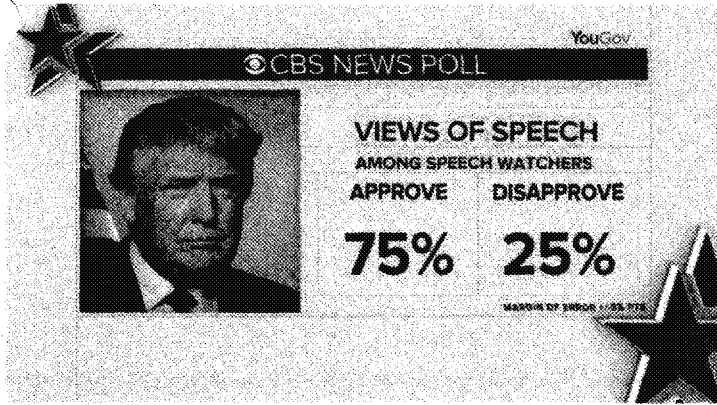
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/viewers-approve-of-trumps-first-state-of-the-union-address-cbs-news-poll/>

Viewers approve of Trump's first State of the Union address – CBS News poll

y: Jennifer De Pinto, Fred Backus, Kabir Khanna and Anthony Salvanto, 1/30/18

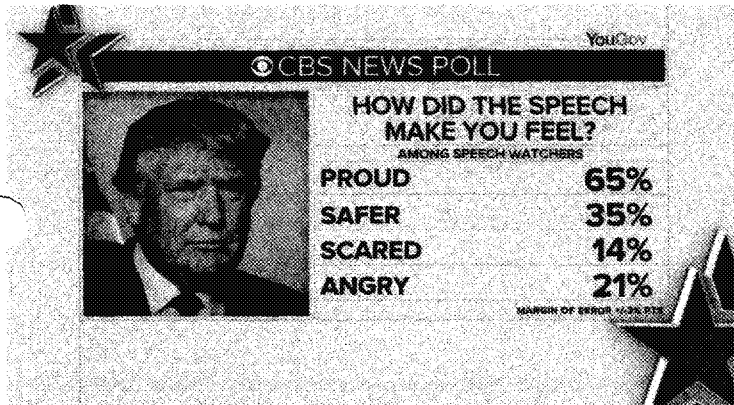
Views of the speech

Three in four Americans who tuned in to President Trump's State of the Union address tonight approved of the speech he gave. Just a quarter disapproved.



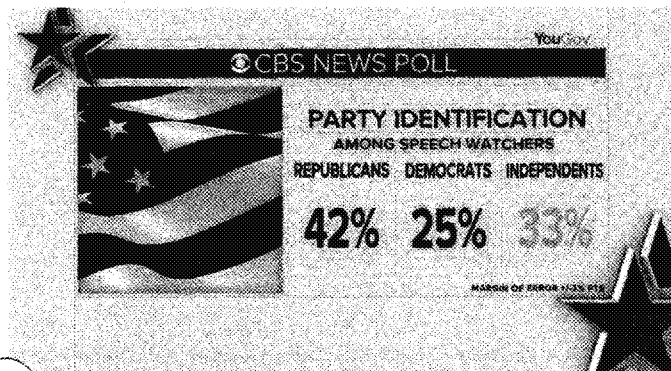
How did the speech make you feel?

Eight in 10 Americans who watched tonight felt that the president was trying to unite the country, rather than divide it. Two-thirds said the speech made them feel proud, though just a third said it made them feel safer. Fewer said the speech made them feel angry or scared.

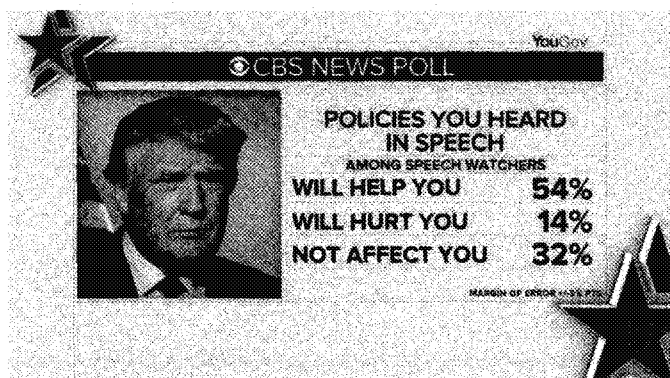


Party Identification

But as is often the case in State of the Union addresses, the people who watched tonight's speech leaned more towards the president's own party, at least compared to Americans overall. In the latest CBS national poll released earlier this month, 24 percent of Americans identified themselves as Republicans. Among those who watched tonight's address, that percentage was 42 percent, bolstering the overall approval of the address.

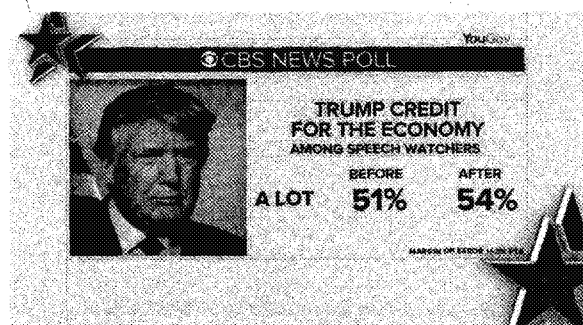


After hearing his State of the Union address, most viewers think the policies they heard tonight would help them personally, though Democrats disagree.



On some of the specific issues the President touched upon, most viewers had a favorable opinion of what Mr. Trump had to say about the nation's infrastructure, immigration, and national security.

And after hearing him speak tonight, 54 percent of speech watchers give him a lot of credit for the current state of the nation's economy, up from 51 percent before they watched the State of the Union.



By: Jeff Daniels, Mike Calia, 1/31/18

The president said the United States was applying "maximum pressure" to prevent any such attack.

"Past experience has taught us that complacency and concessions only invite aggression and provocation," Trump said. "I will not repeat the mistakes of past administrations that got us into this very dangerous position."

Last year, North Korea test launched at least three intercontinental ballistic missiles, including a Hwasong-15 in late November that raised concerns in the U.S. defense community as showed the regime's powerful new missile can reach more than 8,000 miles, including major cities on the U.S. East Coast.

Indeed, the president's harsh comments about North Korea follows CIA Director Mike Pompeo predicting Monday in a BBC broadcast that Pyongyang will be capable of delivering a nuclear-tipped ICBM to the U.S. mainland in "a handful of months."

U.S. defense experts have said that Pyongyang has the technology to have a long-range ballistic missile survive the re-entry phase from space into the earth's atmosphere. They also expect North Korea to return to testing its missiles despite a recent two-month break.

There has been recent talk that hawks in the Trump administration are pushing for the U.S. military to conduct a limited strike, or a so-called preventive attack, against North Korea. There have also been reports the administration may be looking to make a "bloody nose" strike on Pyongyang.

In perhaps a sign of the administration leaning toward a military option, the White House is no longer planning to nominate Korea scholar Victor D. Cha as its ambassador to South Korea. Cha recently opposed the "preventive strike" option in an op-ed. The New York Times reported late Tuesday that the "long-delayed plans to nominate" Cha, a former official in the President George W. Bush administration, to the Seoul post had been dropped.

Trump also called out at North Korea for its mistreatment of Otto Warmbier, the 22-year-old student who died last June shortly after being returned from North Korea in an unconscious state. In 2016, Warmbier confessed to trying to steal a propaganda banner in North Korea and was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor in prison.

"We need only look at the depraved character of the North Korean regime to understand the nature of the nuclear threat it could pose to America and to our allies," said Trump.

Trump also introduced Warmbier's family, including his parents and siblings, who were invited guests attending the State of the Union address. They received lengthy applause and standing ovations.

"You are powerful witnesses to a menace that threatens our world, and your strength truly inspires us all," the president said after introducing the family. "Tonight, we pledge to honor Otto's memory with total American resolve."

Finally, Trump introduced Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean defector who fled the isolated regime in 1996 as a starving boy. The president said Seong-ho, who is now an activist living in Seoul, was a "witness to the ominous nature of this regime."

According to Trump, Seong-ho lost limbs in an accident, was tortured by North Korean authorities and later "traveled thousands of miles on crutches across China and Southeast Asia to freedom. Most of his family followed. His father was caught trying to escape, and was tortured to death."

Seong-ho raised his wooden crutches to loud cheers and a standing ovation during the State of the Union address.

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/01/30/heres-why-the-doj-watchdog-is-investigating-andrew-mccabe/>

Here's why the DOJ watchdog is investigating Andrew McCabe

The Justice Department's inspector general has been investigating whether former FBI Director Andrew McCabe tried to delay an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails until after the 2016 election, according to a new report. The Washington Post reports that DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz is looking into why McCabe appears to have waited three weeks to inspect a laptop owned by Anthony Weiner and his wife, Huma Abedin, a longtime Clinton aide.

In a surprise move, McCabe stepped down from his position as FBI No. 2 on Monday. He will remain on leave until March when he can retire with a full pension.

McCabe's sudden decision prompted widespread speculation that he had been forced out by President Trump. Trump has publicly criticized McCabe and other FBI officials over the past year.

McCabe, 49, has also become a prime target for Republican lawmakers in the wake of a scandal involving politically-biased text messages exchanged between FBI officials Peter Strzok and Lisa Page.

Page, an FBI lawyer, worked under McCabe during the Clinton email investigation and Russia probe.

In one Aug. 15, 2016 exchange, Strzok referred to a meeting that had taken place in McCabe's office where Trump's election chances were discussed. Strzok told Page that an "insurance policy" needed to be taken out in the event of a Trump win.

After McCabe stepped down, The New York Times reported that FBI Director Christopher Wray had forced McCabe out because of findings by Horowitz.

According to The Post, Horowitz's investigators have been asking witnesses in FBI leadership about the timeline of the investigation into Weiner's laptop. The Post reports:

A key question of the internal investigation is whether McCabe or anyone else at the FBI wanted to avoid taking action on the laptop findings until after the Nov. 8 election, these people said. It is unclear whether the inspector general has reached any conclusions on that point.

McCabe first learned of the Clinton emails in late September or early Oct. 2016. They were discovered by FBI agents in the New York field office during their investigation into Weiner's interactions with an underage girl.

In late Oct. 2016, then-FBI Director James Comey informed Congress of the newly-discovered emails and said that the Clinton investigation was being re-opened. Comey announced the end of the Clinton email investigation in July 2016. Comey closed the investigation again on Nov. 6, two days before the election.

The investigation into McCabe is ironic for two reasons.

Had McCabe acted quickly to investigate Weiner's laptop, investigators seemingly would have been able to clear Clinton well before Election Day.

The entire investigation was also taken on because of congressional Democrats' allegations that the FBI mishandled the email investigation. Democrats have blamed Comey and the FBI's decision to re-open the investigation for Clinton's loss to Trump.